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**Baptists. South Carolina. Bethel Association, 1794.
Minutes ... at ... Fair Forest ... the 9th of August,
1794.**

[Charleston, 1794.] 8 pp.

JCB copy.

M I N U T E S

OF THE

B E T H E L A S S O C I A T I O N,

*Held at the Baptist Church in Fair Forest, in Union County, South-Carolina, begun
on Saturday, the 9th of August, 1794.*

1. **T**HE two first days were employed, as usual, in the public exercises of devotion.
2. On Monday, 10 o'clock, A. M. the introductory sermon was delivered by Brother Abraham Marshall, from Ezek. 1. and 21st. "*For the spirit of the living creatures was in the wheels.*"
3. Letters from thirty-nine churches were read, and the names of their delegates enrolled.
4. Brother James Fowler was chosen moderator, and brother William Ford, clerk.
5. The minutes of the Charleston Association, with their letter for the last year. Likewise, a letter from the Georgia, and minutes from the Portsmouth Associations were read. Brother Abraham Marshall appearing as the messenger of the Georgia Association, was accordingly received. The messengers from the Charleston Association did not attend. The ministering brethren, provisionally present, (not delegates) were also invited to a seat.
6. Eleven churches applied for admission into this association, and on satisfactory information of their faith and practice, were received by their delegates.
7. Agreed, that it be recommended to all the churches in union to observe the first Wednesday in October next, as a day of solemn fasting and prayer to God, to implore his mercy on all our churches; that a revival of religion may take place in the minds of careless professors, and a general reformation among the people of these United States.
8. Agreed, that brother Alexander M'Dugal prepare the circular letters; that Bayles Eastles write to the Georgia, and David L. Ely to the Charleston Associations; and John Waller to the General Committee in Virginia.
9. The committee appointed last year, to enquire into the state of Genesee church, report, they find it extinct.

10. Agreed

10. Agreed that a committee be appointed to take up the *queries* that were laid over at our last session, and also two that appears in letters directed to the present meeting, and give their opinion to the association to-morrow. The committee appointed are our brethren Waller, Fowler, Shackelford, Lilly, M'Dougal, Estes and Ford. Adjourned 'till to-morrow, 9 o'clock, A. M.

T U E S D A Y, met according to adjournment.

11. The committee appointed the last evening, reported the following answers to the queries in minute the 12th of the last year. 1st. What shall be done with negro professors that have been married (in their way) and separated by compulsion: May they marry while their husbands or wives are yet alive? Answer, we find such difficulties attending this question, arising from the nature and existence of slavery, that we judge it best to leave it to the discretion of every church to decide on, as it may become a matter of concern to them; but advise that christian masters use the utmost care to prevent such separations, which give occasion to the query. 2). Where a master and negro servant are both members in a gospel church, is the master justifiable in correcting the servant with stripes for disobedience? Answer, both masters and parents (while the children are in their non-age) have a right to govern their household, and to use the rod, if need be; yet are subject to the discipline of the church, for cruelty or oppression. Minute 14. Can a person who hath been baptized by a pedobaptist, by immersion, on profession of his faith, be received a member in fellowship, without being rebaptized? Answer, we think there are some circumstances wherein he may be received without being rebaptized. Minute 16. What authority have we to give the appellation of reverend to a minister of the gospel? Answer, we conceive terms which are proper and expressive of character, are, on all occasions, lawful or according to the scriptures; and, as reverence is acknowledged to belong to the character and office of a gospel minister, and such are declared to be worthy of double honor, we conceive it may be consistently used; yet, if it should give offence to weak brethren, it would be better, in such cases, to omit it. The appellation of brother, in transacting religious concerns, is more directly after the example of the scripture.

Query from Cambridge church. Which is the most eligible way of governing churches, by the decision of a majority, or by unanimity? Answer, by unanimity when practicable; but, by majority is, in many cases, necessary. Query from Bush River church. Can a member be held in fellowship, that hath conveyed his property out of his hands, in order to prevent his creditors from recovering their lawful demands. Answer, he cannot.

12. On motion, agreed, that the answers, given by the committee, to these queries, be adopted as conveying the sense of this association; excepting the query relating to baptism, the majority being of opinion, that the regular baptism of the administrator, and his sentiments in favor of believer's baptism, are necessary to the right administration of the ordinance to any subject.

13. Voted, that the corresponding associations be addressed on the subject of forming a general committee.

14. Voted,

14. Voted, that brethren Richard Shackelford, Joshua Palmer, Joseph Logan, Moses Holland, James Chastain, and Alexander Davison, be a committee to enquire into a matter of grief subsisting between Middle Fork, Saluda, and head of Suoree churches, and report their proceedings at our next meeting.

15. Supplies to the vacant churches that made application: to Stephen's Creek, John Waller, Richard Shackelford, and David Lilly. To Bull-Town, Stephen Gafford, and John Buiger. To Cedar Spring, Alexander M'Dougal and Richard Wood. To a branch of Pacolet church on Fishing creek, James Fowler and Davies Collins.

16. The circular letter, and the letters to the corresponding associations, and also the letter to the General Committee in Virginia, were brought forward, read, and approved.

Voted, that brethren James Fowler and Davies Collins, be our messengers to the Charleston association, to convene the Saturday before the first Lord's day in November next, at Flat creek meeting house, on Lynch's creek; and brethren Richard Shackelford, Alexander M'Dougal, and David Lilly, to the Georgia Association, to convene at Kioka meeting house, Saturday before the third Lord's day in October next.

17. Voted, our next session of association be held at the Baptist church on Jamey's creek, Spartanburgh county, the second Saturday in August next. The delegates are desired to attend on that day to give in their letters; brother Joshua Palmer to preach the introductory sermon, and in case of failure, brother David Lilly to be prepared. Brother John Waller to prepare the circular letter: the subject, an answer to the question, wherein is the faith of a real christian, distinguished from that of a formal professor?

18. Made collection for printing the minutes, and requested brother Fowler to superintend the business as usual.

Concluded by exhortation and solemn prayer.

STATE OF THE CHURCHES.

The Ministers names are in capitals; Licensed Preachers in Italics; Churches distinguished with an asterisk (*) we had no account from, their numbers stand as they did the last year; Pastors or Messengers, to whose names a dash (—) is fixed, denotes a vacancy.

CHURCHES.	MESSENGERS.	Baptized.	Rec. by Letter.	Dissolved.	Ex-communication.	Deaths.	Members.
Buffalo,*	JOSEPH CAMP.						0
Tyger River,	{ ———, George Brutan, William Ford.	3	4	2	1		21
Green River,	DANIEL BROWN, John Blakewell.	8	2	1			22
Bill's Creek,	————, John Owensby.	1	2	2			10
Buck Creek,	JOHN HIGHTOWER, William Garret.	43	6	32			17
Head of Enoree,	{ JOSEPH LOGAN, DANIEL FLANNERY.	2	7	10	5	1	112
Sandy Run,	{ ———, Alexander Davison, John Jones.		2	2	0	1	2
Fair Forest,	{ ALEXANDER M'DOUGAL, Obadiah Howard.		4	1			2
Padget's Creek,	JOHN PUTMAN, William Woolbanks.	1	4	1			10
Mountain Creek, N. C.	PERMINTER MORGAN, Wm. Green.	3	5	3			112
Bigg Creek,	{ MOSES HOLLAND, Peter Graham, J. M. Cutchen.	10	22	2	1		27
Horse Creek,	————, Daniel Ford.		1		4		1
Cedar Spring,	{ ———, Jesse Connel, Joroyal Barnett.	1	6				27
Upper Duncan Creek,	JOSHUA PALMER, Roger Brown.	4	9	2			4
Pacolet,	RICHARD WOOD, Samuel M'Creary.						
Lower Duncan Creek,	————, Rueben Roculen, Abner Catey.	2	1				7
Jamey's Creek,	{ RICHARD SHACKLEFORD, Joseph Woodruff.	18	9	2	4		1
Sandy River,	{ JAMES FOWLER, Churchill Carter, William Bell.						
Bush River,	————, Jesse Brooks.	1		3			1
Sisona,*	WILLIAM MURPHEY, Joseph Price.						1
Rockey Creek, Catawba,*	EDWARD PIGG.						1
Big Branch Enoree,	————, Joseph Woolbanks.	1	2				21
Middle Saluda,*	JOHN CHASTAIN, Benjamin Stuart.						1
Little River,	{ ———, James Crocker, Cadon Ghent.	5	3	2	1		27
Enoree,	{ JACOB KING, JESSE OWEN, Edmund Gains.		2		1		81
French Broad River.	RICHARD NEWPORT.		1				27
Rockey Creek,	{ ———, Henry Robertson, Elisha Majors.		2	7	3	1	17
		103	94	141	41		1826

CHURCHES.	MESSENGRS.	Baptized.	Rec. by Letter.	Dismissed.	Evangelism.	Dead.	Number.
	Brought forward,	103	64	141	41	7	1816
Turkey Creek,	STEPHEN GAFFORD, John Nash.		5	11			61
Main Saluda,	_____, Joseph Willis.						37
Cloud's Creek,	{ PATRICK QUARTEMAS, Thomas DeLoach.						26
Bull-Town, Keowee, ⁿ	_____, Isaac Vernon		3				12
Concord,	EDMUND BEARDEN, Bayles Earles.	1	12	4	3		17
Catawba,	DAVIES COLLINS, John Robison.	3	3	2	2		48
Sugar Creek,	{ JOHN ROOKER, J. Smith, William Petties.	1					29
Durham,	_____, Arthur Durham.						23
Goffen,	{ THOMAS BURGESS, William Pool, Ed- mund Ellis.						15
Cambridge,	JOHN WALLER, DAVID LILLY.						40
Shockley Ferry,	{ _____, Barnet Putman, Jacob Bradilton,						56
Mill Creek,	{ _____, John Balger, Nathaniel Abner.						71
Stephen's Creek,	_____, Jonathan Efrey, John Still.						36
Coronaço,	{ _____, Ahimaz Spencer, Samuel Dewitt.						58
Brush Creek,	_____, Henry Machen.						25
Mountain Creek, S. C.	THOMAS WHITMAN.						21
Little Horse Creek,	JAMES CHASTAIN, James Kinman.						15
Boiling Spring,	{ _____, William Brandon, William Turner.						20
							58
Increase since last year, 7.		111	120	108	46	12	2417

The CIRCULAR LETTER.

The Bethel Association, met at Fair Forest on Saturday, the 9th day of August, 1824,
to the several churches they represent. And Christian salutation.

BELOVED BRETHREN,

WE have had the happiness of meeting according to adjournment, at the time
and place appointed, and are truly sensible of the good cis and mercy of
God, who is still affording us these precious moments of long suffering and grace ;
moments which call for our warmest thanks, as dependant creatures, and to ascribe
all praise to our indulgent and merciful benefactor.

The accounts transmitted in your respective letters, with the faithful attendance
of your delegates, together with the addition of a number of individuals to our
churches.

churches, and churches to our confederacy, add much to our present happiness, and afford us the pleasing hope that the Lord has owned, so he will bless our weak endeavours.

Though our minutes will fully acquaint you with the business of our present meeting, yet we wish to recommend to your serious consideration, a few things which may tend to our mutual happiness as citizens, as church members, and as gospel ministers.

First then, as citizens, we exhort you with the apostle, to be subject to every ordinance of man, for the Lord's sake; and we think this command carries more in it than bare submission, as you are here to regard the authority of God, who calls for the whole heart in every command. In this point of view it calls for your warmest regard and fervent prayer, for the peace and welfare of the commonwealth. For a proof of this read Jeremiah 29. 7. where we find the Lord commanding Israel, (when in captivity in the land of their enemy) thus, "Seek the peace of the city whither I have caused you to be carried away captive, and pray unto the Lord for it: for in the peace thereof shall ye have peace." Here we have not only the authority of God's command, but a strong motive to excite us to our duty, even our own peace depending on our obedience. And in corroboration with this, the apostle directs Timothy to exhort the people under his care, to pray for all that are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life, in all godliness and honesty.

Secondly. As church members in your different stations in the house of God, you are exhorted by the apostle, "To consider one another, to provoke unto love and to good works:" Love, as a fruit of the spirit, and a most excellent grace, the root or cause of all good works, is much insisted on throughout the New Testament, as a property essential to the existence of christianity in the soul. Without love we have no claim to the christian character, and scarce deserve to be styled men. But, on the other hand, nothing makes you so amiable in the sight of God as love; for God is love, and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him. This is the bond of perfectness; on it hangs the mutual happiness of church members; also, of husbands and wives; of children and parents; of servants and masters. This grace that assimilates you to your dear master is not partial, but universal and unfeigned: having for its object, first, the three persons in the adorable trinity, as you stand related to them in their different offices in the covenant of grace. Secondly, your brethren, "This commandment have we from him, that he who loveth God, love his brother also." Thirdly, your enemies also: "But I say unto you love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you." This love stands not in words, "be ye warmed and filled," but calls for action, as a proof of its existence. Then we hope, that you who possess this heavenly grace, as a native consequence flowing therefrom, will be found in the habitual exercise of tender reproofs and loving admonitions, still remembering to exercise christian forbearance; yet you are not tamely to see a brother sin and not reprove him; for to withhold reproof from an offending brother, would be doing him a real injury, for reproofs of instruction are the way of life. Again. This
love

love will excite you conscientiously to attend on the important business of maintaining good order and christian discipline in the church of God. Yet some we see who have so little sense of the importance of discipline, that they seldom attend church meetings for business; and to excuse themselves, will plead weakness or ignorance, and generally conclude that the ministers, and a few of the principal members, are sufficient. The apostle in his 13th chapter, 1 Cor. obviates all such frivolous pleas, informing us, that we are the members of Christ's body. In this sense the eye cannot say to the hand, I have no need of thee; nor the head to the feet, I have no need of you; nay, much more those members of the body which seem to be more feeble, are necessary; and even those members which are esteemed to be less honorable, and such as may to themselves and others appear weak and ignorant, are not to be absent, otherwise the body must be lame, and your absence practically says, you are not of the body.

You will readily grant that lukewarmness and indifferency is injurious to religion, and is contrary to the spirit of christianity, and highly provoking to the king of saints. The shameful negligence of too many professors in this respect, is one grand cause of the decay of religion: hereby your own souls become lean, the hands of your brethren weakened, their spirits grieved, your ministers much discouraged; and as a just judgment, God leaves you in doubts, darkness, and a heart-felt sense of the want of his presence. We therefore earnestly press it upon you, not to forsake or neglect assembling with your brethren, but rather count it your happiness and a blessing; yes, not only a profitable but an honorable station. Beware of covetousness, which is idolatry; let it have no place in your hearts, but cheerfully contribute according to your ability towards defraying the necessary expences of the church, as no church can long exist without some charges. To excite you to the discharge of this duty, consider, that all you have is from God; and those that give liberally never will find themselves the losers by it: for what is thus lent to the Lord he will repay with ample interest: for he that soweth sparingly shall reap sparingly; and he who soweth bountifully shall reap bountifully. Nor is the widow's two mites forgotten.

Dear brethren, the too little regard that has hitherto been paid to our circular letter, tempts us to fear, that you view it as a form or complement, and read it with too much indifferency: while we write with a fervent soul, breathing desire that you would seriously consider the languishing state of religion in general, amongst us at present. Is it any thing to you? Have you no concern in this matter? Can you pass it by without a heart-felt concern? Or has the world become your object? Has it stole into your heart, like a thief in the dark, to rob you of that comfort and happiness, you once found in your Lord?

The Lord clears himself in this matter, when he says, in Isaiah 59 v. 2. "The Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that he cannot hear. But your iniquities have separated between you and your God; and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear." Sin then is the cause, we are faulty; sin lieth at our door. Then say, not with the disciples of old, Lord is it I? But let each one wrestle with God for the return of his presence, by intense and fervent prayer; that the wedge, or babylonish garment may be found

out; that the achan of covetousness, worldly-mindedness, slothfulness, omission of duty, indifferency about gospel ordinances, church discipline, and your ministers—that these, and the like may be found out, in whose tent they are: and let all God's Israel stone them with stones, and burn them with the fire of Godly zeal and repentance; and give glory to the Lord God of Israel, that his fierce anger may be turned away. Under such circumstances, can we expect any better than the hidings of God's face; does he not in his cry against his people of old for the like reason, and tell them and us, by the prophet Malachi, that they robbed him, even in tithes and offerings. Again. Does he not expostulate with them and us, in the most tender language; when he says, "bring ye all the tithes into the store-house, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of Hosts, if I will not open you the windows of Heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room to receive it." Here you have a charge of robbery against you, a heavy charge, even robbing God. "Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me, in as much as ye have withheld from one of the least of these, ye did it not to me."

Thirdly. We call upon you who are ministers of the glorious gospel, to consider your honorable station in the church: not with a view to swell, or exalt you, but on the contrary, to humble you; that you may consider yourselves the lowly servants of the church, even as empty earthen vessels, depending altogether on the fulness of Christ, for every needful qualification. We feelingly sympathize with you, under the many difficulties and burdens you bear. The sad declension of religion, the discouragements some of you may feel by the remissness of your brethren, in different respects; and by besetting temptations, from the world, the flesh, and the devil, three potent enemies. We would encourage you, brethren, with that heart-cheering promise, my grace is sufficient for you. Be strong therefore in the grace that is in Christ Jesus: endure hardness as good soldiers of Jesus. Remember, that no man that wareth, entangleth himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him, who hath chosen him to be a soldier. Beware of covetousness. Beware of a man pleasing spirit, which is base and contemptible in the sight of God. Contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints. Be shut up to the preparation of the gospel of peace, still ready to give an answer to any who may ask you a reason of the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear. Keep your garments unspotted from the word. Let no man, devil nor lust, take your crown. Brethren, meditate often on these things; least while you preach the gospel to others, you become a callaway. In one word, let ministers and people to conduct, that, when we shall be called to stand before the judge of quick and dead, the one to give an account of his stewardship, and the other of the improvement of the great and many privileges they enjoy through the purchase of his death; may we then have the heart felt pleasure to say, and you the joy to hear us pronouncing, here are we, Lord, and the flocks thou hast committed to our trust. Where we may unite in ascribing all glory to God and the Lamb forever, is the prayer of your unworthy brethren in gospel bonds. Brethren pray for us.

JAMES FOWLER, *Moderator.*
WILLIAM FORD, *Clert.*